steady fall in consumption is indicative of a moral awakening in the people. The decreasing consumption is, however, attributed by the department to the continuance of the depression in the economic conditions brought on by the European War, which seriously affected the purchasing power of the classes who form the drinking population. The special attention of the Excise Commissioner has been directed to a careful investigation of the whole question. The total quantity of foreign liquor imported also fell from 29,217 gallons in 1090 to 25,604 gallons in 1091, or by 3,613 gallons. Perhaps the rise in prices has rendered the consumption of foreign liquor prohibitive. The decline, nevertheless, cannot, in any case, but be viewed with satisfaction. The price of opium was raised from Bh. Rs. 40 to Bh. Rs. 42-8-0 with effect from the 1st April 1916. The total number of opium and ganja shops fell from 255 to 241. Certain modifications were made in the Tobacco Rules in view to the more effective protection of the revenue under that head.

18. **Customs.**—Out of Rs. 13,50,635, the total revenue under 'Customs,' the duty on exports amounted to 91·2 per cent and on imports to 8·8 per cent. An export duty of Bh. Re. 1-as. 8 per 100 lbs. was imposed on tea exported from Travancore with effect from the 1st March 1916. This duty, including the advance payment for 1092, amounted to Rs. 1,26,710. 69·3 per cent of the aggregate export revenue represents the duty on the produce of the cocoanut tree. The Land Customs Regulation, II of 1091, came into force from the 1st Meenam 1091. Rules under this Regulation were passed for the grant of licenses for the storage and sale of articles subject to export duty, in places situated within a distance of one mile from the land frontier of Travancore, and manifest-registering stations were fixed for the customs houses in the taluks bordering on the Cochin State. The revised tariff values of the produce of the cocoanut and arecanut trees, introduced tentatively in 1082, were continued for another three years. The import tariff was also revised during the year.

19. **Stamps.**—Since the close of the year, the introduction of half-chuckram Court-fee stamp paper has been sanctioned to enable parties to prepare copies of documents and produce them with plaints and written statements on durable paper, and to cover the cost of comparing such copies with the original records.

PROTECTION.

20. **Legislation.**—Four ordinary meetings of the Legislative Council were held during 1091. Three Regulations were passed by the Council and three by His Highness the Maha Raja direct. Since the close of the year, the Companies Regulation Amendment Bill and the Christian Succession Bill have passed into law. The latter is the second piece of social legislation in Travancore, the first being the Nair Regulation, I of 1088. This enactment was the outcome of the repeated representations of the members of the Christian community, both in and outside the Assembly. It regulates succession to the property of an intestate and does not, in any way, interfere with the power of testamentary disposition. The Bill was before the public for over four years and was most carefully considered at every stage. There was opposition from some members of one section of the community affected, in regard to certain provisions. On the other hand, there was considerable pressure from a very large section of the Christians, who considered that it would be a calamity to drop the Bill at the final stage. After a careful consideration of all the circumstances connected with the measure, the Bill was passed. If, in the working of the Regulation, any provisions are found to be defective, I may assure you that the Government will not be slow to consider the necessary amendments. The Nanjanad Vellala Bill was withdrawn in response to the representations of the community that a more comprehensive Bill on the subject is necessary. The Criminal Tribes Bill was also withdrawn, as its introduction into the State was considered unnecessary. Two of the most important Bills now under consideration are the Travancore Municipal Bill and the Travancore Chitties Bill. The existing Towns Conservancy and Improvement Regulation does not adequately meet the requirements of efficient Municipal administration. The new Municipal Bill is so framed as to confer considerably enhanced powers in respect of civic administration.

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